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CIVIL WAR™

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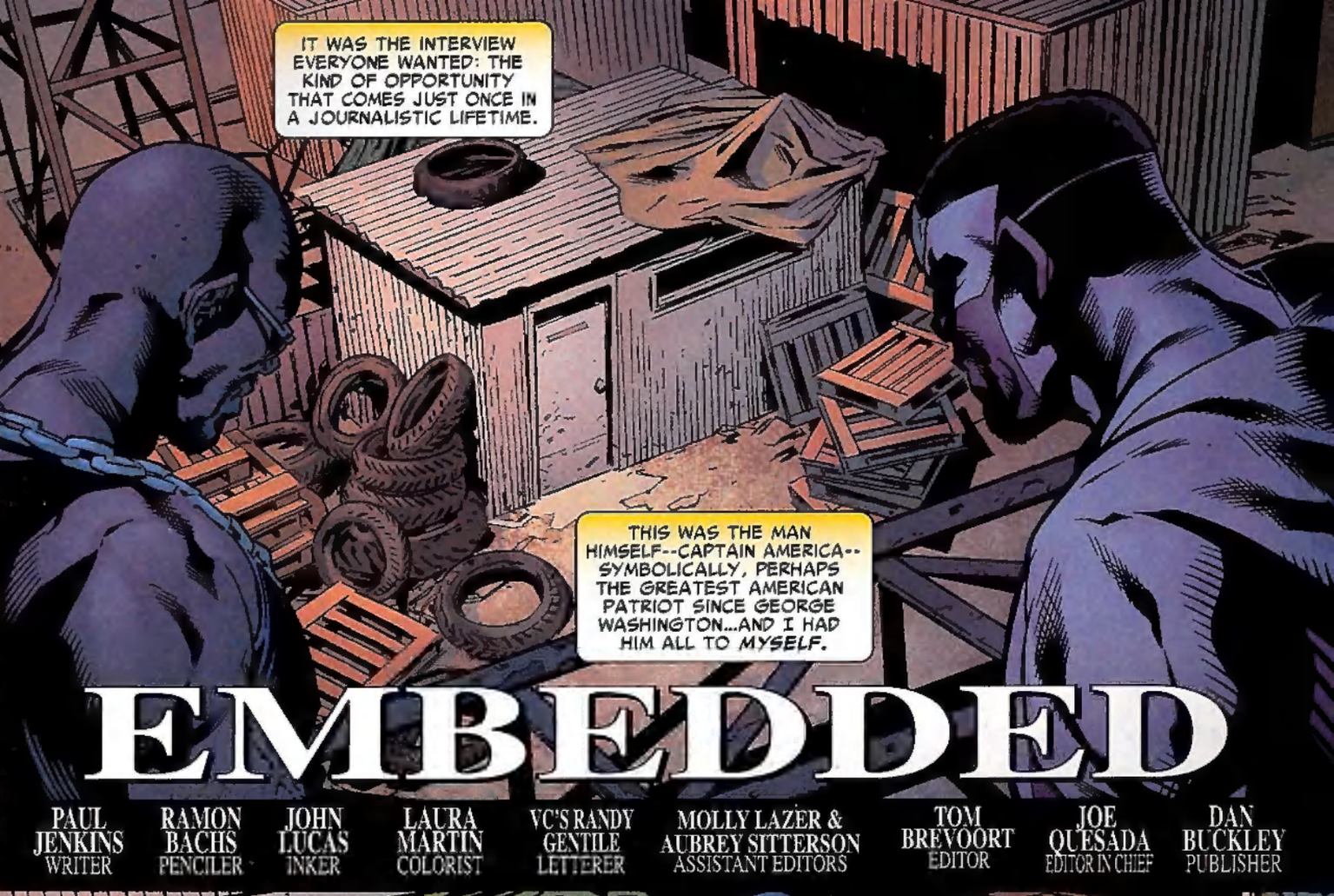
IT WAS THE INTERVIEW EVERYONE WANTED: THE KIND OF OPPORTUNITY THAT COMES JUST ONCE IN A JOURNALISTIC LIFETIME.
THIS WAS THE MAN HIMSELF--CAPTAIN AMERICA--SYMBOLICALLY, PERHAPS THE GREATEST AMERICAN PATRIOT SINCE GEORGE WASHINGTON...AND I HAD HIM ALL TO *MYSELF*.

EMBEDDED

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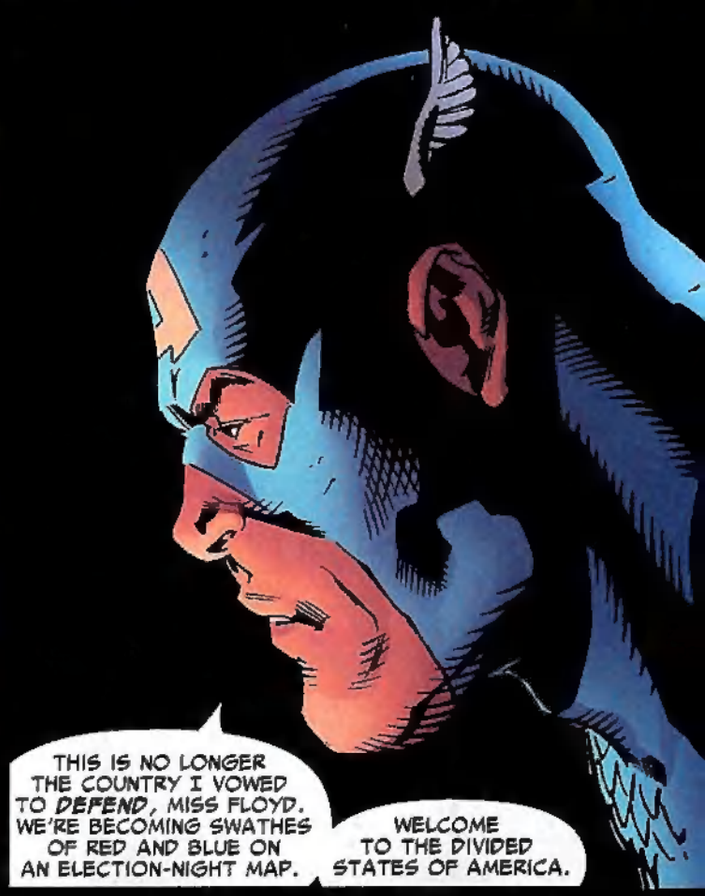
I KNOW A HUNDRED JOURNALISTS WHO WOULD HAVE GIVEN THEIR RIGHT ARM TO BE ME AT THIS MOMENT. HERE WAS THE VERY PERSONIFICATION OF THE AMERICAN WAY GONE ROGUE, TELLING HIS STORY FOR THE FIRST TIME.
AND WITHIN TWELVE SECONDS I KNEW WHERE THAT STORY WAS *GOING*.

...SO WHAT'S THE MESSAGE YOU'RE TRYING TO *CONVEY*, SIR? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO TURN YOU AGAINST THE VERY PEOPLE YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALLIED WITH?
I DIDN'T TURN AGAINST THEM. I ASKED FOR TIME TO REVIEW THIS INSANE POLICY--I ASKED THEM TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE SO THAT CALMER HEADS COULD PREVAIL--AND THEY TURNED ME DOWN.


THIS IS NO LONGER THE COUNTRY I VOWED TO *DEFEND*, MISS FLOYD. WE'RE BECOMING SWATHES OF RED AND BLUE ON AN ELECTION-NIGHT MAP.
WELCOME TO THE DIVIDED STATES OF AMERICA.

NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THIS TO SOMEONE OF YOUR STATURE, SIR... BUT HAVEN'T WE *ALWAYS* BEEN ABOUT RED STATES AND BLUE? ISN'T BEING UGLY AMERICANS PART OF WHAT MAKES US SO INTERESTING TO THE REST OF THE WORLD?
AND AREN'T YOU DUTY-BOUND TO DEFEND THE RULE OF LAW, EVEN IF IT MEANS DEFENDING SOMETHING YOU DON'T PERSONALLY AGREE WITH? BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE MEANS CIVIL WAR--
WAR IS ANYTHING BUT CIVIL, MISS FLOYD. IT'S THE LAST RESORT OF THE DESPERATE... AND YET HERE WE ARE.
FOR SIXTY-ODD YEARS, MY GOVERNMENT LOOKED TO ME TO DEFEND FREEDOM. I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE I WAS DEFENDING A DICTATORSHIP.
"BELIEVE ME, I'VE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN INSANE IDEA GETS OUT OF HAND.
"THE LAST TIME, IT TORE EUROPE TO PIECES. THE WORLD STOOD AT THE BRINK BECAUSE ONE MAN DECIDED TO PRESS THE IDEA OF ARYAN SUPREMACY INTO SERVICE.
"WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WE WERE GETTING INTO THEN. WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GLORIOUS TO DEFEND OUR NOTIONS AGAINST THEIRS.
"WE MERELY WASTED THE POTENTIAL OF A MILLION YOUNG MEN."
JUST ONE BAD IDEA, MISS FLOYD.
THINK OF ALL THE *DAMAGE* THAT CAN DO.

SIR, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO SPARE ME THE COMPARISONS TO NAZI GERMANY BECAUSE I'M NOT BUYING IT.
SINCE YOU WERE THERE, YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER THAT MOST OF THE GERMAN FORCES WERE WEHRMACHT--REGULAR ARMY GUYS WHO SIMPLY FOUGHT AN' DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY.
IN OTHER WORDS, PATRIOTS FIGHTING FOR THE WRONG CAUSE.
THAT'S MY POINT EXACTLY, MISS FLOYD. I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS--
WAR IS NEVER ABOUT WHO'S *RIGHT*, SIR--IT'S ABOUT WHO'S *LEFT*. AND THAT PERSON USUALLY WRITES THE HISTORY.
YOU'RE BEING SIMPLISTIC--
YOU KNOW, I THOUGHT THERE'D BE A STORY HERE, BUT ALL I'M GETTING IS HOW YOU'RE A TRUE PATRIOT AND HOW THE OTHERS COULDN'T *POSSIBLY* BE.
CAP PROMISED ME FIFTEEN MINUTES. I TOOK FIVE, AND LEFT EARLY FOR MY DATE AT NINE...
...FEELING PRETTY HACKED OFF, AND WITH NO PARTICULAR STORY TO WRITE. COULDN'T WORK OUT WHY.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HE SOUNDED LIKE ME A FEW WEEKS AGO: STUBBORN, CERTAIN HE WAS *RIGHT*...
...YET SUPREMELY *MISGUIDED*.

IT'S GONNA TAKE A COUPLE OF MINUTES. WE JUST PULL UP THEIR REVENUE REPORTS AND MATCH THEM TO A TIMELINE. THAT'LL TELL US IF THEIR STOCK'S TIED TO EVENTS ONLY STARK WOULD KNOW ABOUT.
'CAUSE THAT WOULD BE THE VERY *DEFINITION* OF INSIDER TRADING.
BY THE WAY, DOES YOUR WIFE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING AT NIGHT ON HER COMPUTER?
I DON'T THINK SHE'D UNDERSTAND, PETER. DON'T GET ME WRONG... SHE'S INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO KNOW NOT TO ASK ME ABOUT WORK.
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS: IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING YOU DO TO YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER.
MMF. YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, HOW DID YOUR AUNT MAY REACT WHEN SHE FOUND OUT YOU WERE GOING *ROGUE?*
PING!
OH... HEY, WE'RE *IN!*

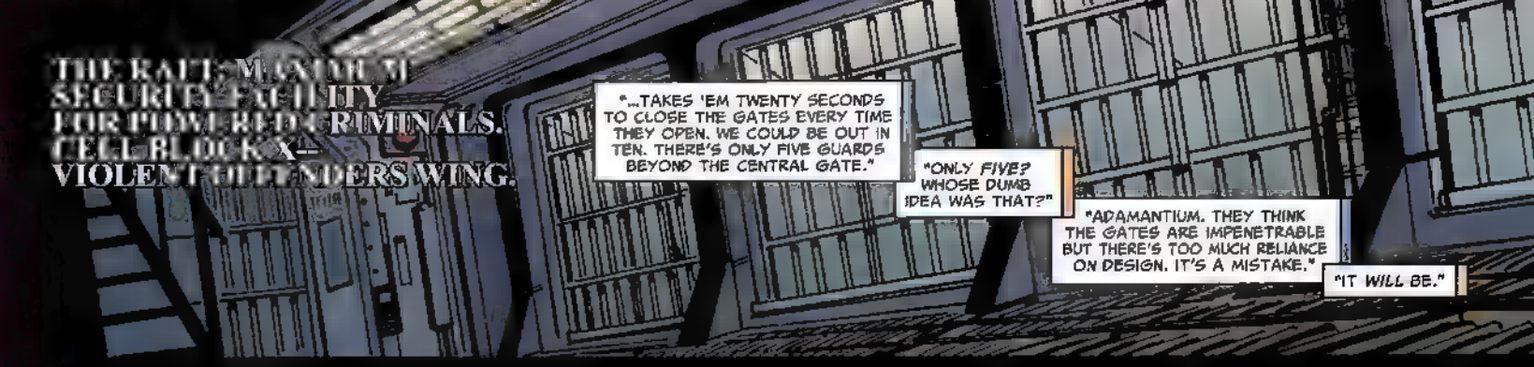
MANHATTAN.
...A LOT OF WHAT WE DO IN COSTUME DIVISION IS PRETTY MUNDANE. A TON OF PAPERWORK AN' STUFF.
MMH. YOU KNOW, DANNY, I NEVER HAD DINNER WITH A DETECTIVE BEFORE.
SERIOUSLY?
SERIOUSLY. I NEVER GOT ON TOO WELL WITH AUTHORITY FIGURES--
--HEY!
WHERE I COME FROM, SALLY, THE GUY PAYS FOR DINNER. CALL ME OLD-FASHIONED.
OKAY. "YOU'RE OLD-FASHIONED."
SORRY.
DON'T BE. IT'S CUTE.

SO BENNY URICH TELLS ME YOU GUYS ARE DOING THE GOBLIN STORY. YOU WORK TOGETHER?
KINDA. I HEARD YOU GUYS HAVE OSBORN IN A LOCKUP DOWNTOWN. ANY CHANCE OF A SCOOP IF I BAT MY EYELIDS A LITTLE?
WELL...I'M NOT REALLY SUPPOSED TO...
BUT FOR YOU I COULD MAKE AN EXCEPTION. NOT SURE THERE'S MUCH TO TELL, THOUGH.
DID OSBORN GIVE ANY REASON FOR ATTACKING THE ATLANTEAN DELEGATION?
NOT YET. HE'S BEEN ACTING KINDA WEIRD. HE KEEPS FOAMING AT THE MOUTH AN' STUFF. WE HAD HIM CHECKED FOR RABIES.
RABIES? SERIOUSLY?
IT MAKES SENSE. IT'D EXPLAIN HIS MENTAL STATE. I COULD SHOW YOU THE DOC'S MEDICAL REPORT, I GUESS.
I MEAN, YOU KNOW... IF YOU WANTED...
YEAH, THAT'D BE GREAT. YOU HAVE A FAX MACHINE? YOU COULD FAX IT TO ME.
WELL, OKAY...
TAXI!

WELL, I GUESS THIS IS GOODBYE. THANKS FOR DINNER, DANNY. YOU'RE A REAL GENTLEMAN.
YEAH, WELL... I WAS THINKING... I MEAN...
WE COULD COME HERE AGAIN SOMETIME.
OR SOMEWHERE ELSE. IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I MEAN IT *MATTERS*... *YOU* KNOW...
...IF YOU *WANTED* TO...
HEY!
WHAT *TOOK* YOU SO LONG?

AVENGERS TOWER.
SOMEONE GOT TO OSBORN AND REPROGRAMMED THE NANITES IN HIS BLOODSTREAM.
I'M CONVINCED NOW MORE THAN EVER.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE, RICHARDS? PERHAPS OSBORN'S BODY CHEMISTRY ALTERED THE CONTROL MECHANISMS--
I WISH IT WERE THAT SIMPLE, CHEN. TONY STARK AND I PROGRAMMED THE NANITES OURSELVES. IN THE EVENT OF A MALFUNCTION, THEY'RE DESIGNED TO INCAPACITATE THE SUBJECT AND SHUT DOWN.
THERE HAD TO BE OUTSIDE HELP.
REED! MORE BAD NEWS--OUR EMISSARY TO ATLANTIS RECEIVED A TWO-WORD RESPONSE THAT ROUGHLY TRANSLATES AS "GO AWAY!"
WE'VE PICKED UP MOVEMENT OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST FROM VIRGINIA DOWN TO FLORIDA. AND THE PENTAGON'S SAYING THEY'VE LOST ONE OF THEIR NUCLEAR SUBS.
JUST ONE FANATIC: THAT'S ALL IT TAKES.
BECAUSE OF OSBORN, OUR CIVIL WAR IS ABOUT TO SPILL OVER ITS BORDERS.

CHEN...YOUR WORK WITH ME ON THE NEGATIVE ZONE PRISON WAS INDISPENSABLE. I THINK I CAN TRUST YOU. I WANT YOU TO FIND OUT FROM CLOC WHO'S HAD ACCESS TO THE NANITE PROGRAMMING IN THE LAST MONTH OR SO.
NO ONE IS ABOVE SUSPICION. NOT EVEN THE SENTRY. NOT EVEN *ME*.
IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO SEE WE HAVE A TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST--
REED...I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU. IN *PRIVATE*.
TONY, I HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
I CAN'T SAY ANY MORE OUT HERE. JUST TRUST ME, WE NEED TO TALK.


THE RAFT: MAXIMUM SECURITY FACILITY FOR POWERED CRIMINALS. CELL BLOCK X— VIOLENT OFFENDERS WING.
"...TAKES 'EM TWENTY SECONDS TO CLOSE THE GATES EVERY TIME THEY OPEN. WE COULD BE OUT IN TEN. THERE'S ONLY FIVE GUARDS BEYOND THE CENTRAL GATE."
"ONLY FIVE? WHOSE DUMB IDEA WAS THAT?"
"ADAMANTIUM. THEY THINK THE GATES ARE IMPENETRABLE BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH RELIANCE ON DESIGN. IT'S A MISTAKE."
"IT WILL BE."

PRISONER ARRIVING. BATCH OF TRANSFERS. THIS SHOULD BE OUR GUY.
WAIT FOR HIM TO GET INTO POSITION. KEEP AN EYE ON THE ARMORED GUARD INSIDE THE EAST WALL RECESS--HE HAS THE EMERGENCY TRIGGERS.
GOTTA GO IN HARD AND QUICK-- DON'T GIVE THEM TIME TO REACT.

THE ACCUSED PART NINE

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YO, BALDWIN! GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!
WANNA GET TO KNOW YOU, BABY-KILLER!
HEY...I GOT SOMETHIN' HERE FOR YOU!
PTUI
HEY! YOU WANNA KNOW WHY I TRANSFERRED HERE, DUDE? 'CAUSE EVERYONE IN MY LAST PRISON IS STILL *UNCONSCIOUS*--
BALDWIN! BACK OFF...NOW!
SORRY, BALDWIN! THAT WAS A COMPLETE ACCIDENT, I SWEAR.
NO, WAIT...WHAT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF "*COMPLETE ACCIDENT*"? HAW!
PRISONER WILLIAMS...THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING! MOVE TO THE BACK OF YOUR CELL!
HH-UKK!

NICE ACTING JOB, BALDWIN. MY FAVORITE PART WAS WHEN YOU PRETENDED TO SOIL YOUR PANTS WITH FEAR.
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, RAZOR FIST. I'M NO PART OF THIS.
I GOT ME ONE CHANCE FOR FREEDOM, ROBBIE-BOY. NOW YOU C'N COOPERATE AND DIE QUICKLY, OR YOU CAN STRUGGLE AND DIE IN PAIN.
EITHER WAY, YOU GET ME OUT OF HERE. MAKES NO ODDS TO ME.
WHAT THE...ARE THESE IDIOTS STUPIDER THAN THEY LOOK? THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF THOSE CELLS, HOSTAGE OR NO HOSTAGE.
LISTEN TO ME, BALDWIN: WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE AND YOU'RE LEADING THE WAY. ANYONE ASKS, IT WAS ALL YOUR IDEA. YOU'RE ALREADY HERE FOR LIFE, SO JUST YOU BE A GOOD HUMAN TARGET AN' I MIGHT LET YOU LIVE.
YOU'LL NEVER GET PAST THE CENTRAL DOORS, MORON.
I WILL IF SOMEONE *OPENS* THEM.

TOWER THREE: WE HAVE AN ATTEMPTED BREAKOUT IN PROGRESS! ALL DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS IN PLACE AND OPERATING NORMALLY--ALERTING WATCHTOWER CONTROL RIGHT NOW!
ARE THEY REALLY THAT DUMB? THEY'VE GOT NOWHERE TO GO.
NEVER STOPPED 'EM ■EFORE--
SKRAAAM!
HA! HEHH...BOY, ARE YOU THE BEST THEY COULD DO? TEN BILLION DOLLARS OF SECURITY SYSTEMS, OPERATED BY MONKEYS?
KLIK
THERE'S THE DOORS! NOW'S OUR CHANCE!

THEY'VE COMPROMISED THE KEYING SYSTEM! CALL CONTROL--
UKK!
FALL BACK! SHOOT TO KILL!
SIR! THEY'VE GOT BALDWIN... THEY'RE USING HIM AS A SHIELD!
NO EXCEPTIONS! NOW FALL BACK!
ONE PROBLEM, RAZOR FIST...
-AH-EHH-
...THE OUTER DOORS ARE MADE OF ADAMANTIUM. I'D JUST AS SOON YOU WERE MILES AWAY, BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, BALDWIN! YOU'RE NOTHING! YOU'RE HUMAN MEAT--CANNON FODDER!
JUST YOU REMEMBER THAT!
NN-AHH!
NOW MOVE!

DELTA, THIS IS AJAX: GOT ONE UP HERE IN THE CONTROL ROOM.
IT'S JUSTINE HAMMER--THE CRIMSON COWL! SHE MUST HAVE FOUND A WAY TO TELEPORT UP! SHE'S OUT LIKE A LIGHT. OVER.
COPY THAT, AJAX.
THEY'RE ALL OUT--EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM. THE ENTIRE BUILDING IS FRIED. GOT THE GRIM REAPER HERE...CAN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE SOME OF THEM.
WHAT ON EARTH...?
THIS IS RAZOR FIST--SURVEILLANCE HAD HIM AS ONE OF THE RINGLEADERS.
HOW DID SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPEN?
SIR! OVER HERE!
DANG.

BEEN DOING A LOT OF THINKING.
ABOUT THE REGISTRATION ACT. I'VE COME TO A DECISION.
WHERE DO I *SIGN?*
TO BE CONCLUDED...

SO YOU KEEP SAYING, MISTER OSBORN.
PROBLEM IS, AS MUCH AS I WANT TO BELIEVE YOU, THERE IS THE SMALL MATTER OF, LIKE, HALF A BILLION WITNESSES WHO WATCHED YOU PULL THE TRIGGER LIVE ON NATIONAL TV.
NOW WHAT WE WANNA KNOW IS HOW YOU MANAGED TO ACCESS WHAT AMOUNTS TO A CLOSED SHOP WITH FAKE PRESS CREDENTIALS THAT WOULDN'T FOOL MY GRANNY.
LET ALONE HOW YOU MANAGED TO GET A WEAPON IN THERE WHEN MOST PEOPLE COULDN'T GET IN A TOOTHPICK.
AND THERE'S THE SMALL MATTER OF HOW YOU DON'T SHOW UP ON ANY SURVEILLANCE TAPES UNTIL YOUR BIG MOMENT.
BUT, SEE, HERE'S THE THING THAT REALLY INTRIGUES ME: HOW COME A MAN OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES SUDDENLY DECIDES IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA TO ATTACK AN ATLANTEAN WITH A .38 CALIBER PISTOL?
HARDLY THE KIND OF WEAPON YOU'D EXPECT TO MAKE A DENT WITH, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? UNLESS YOU NEVER INTENDED TO MAKE A DENT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
CHECK THE FACTS, YOU UNIMAGINATIVE, FLAT-FOOTED *HARRIDAN.* THIS WAS NONE OF MY DOING--
OH YEAH, MISTER OSBORN? WHO?
I CAN'T *SAY.*

Private William Eldridge of Battersea, London, enlisted in the 13th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers just a few short months after his wedding day. He fought at Arras, France, and was wounded in battle in the early days of November, 1917.

William was taken to a clearing station on the outskirts of Thiepval, France, where he died as a result of his wounds on November 4th.

His body was laid to rest in the Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun. He lies in Section 1, Row O, Grave Number 22.

William Eldridge was my great grandfather.

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, MY GRANDPARENTS KEPT ALL THEIR FAMILY PHOTOS ABOVE THE FIREPLACE NEAR TWO LARGE, BRONZE MEDALLIONS.
THE FUTURE
THE MEDALLIONS COMMEMORATED THE LOSSES OF MY GREAT GRANDDAD, WILLIAM ELDRIDGE AND MY GREAT UNCLE CHARLIE HAZLEGROVE.
THE PHOTOS WERE PLACED NEAR THE MEDALLIONS AS IF TO SAY, "THESE PEOPLE LIVE FREE BECAUSE OF THE SACRIFICES MADE BY THEIR ANCESTORS."
MY GRANDDAD BILL WOULD SIT AND POKE AT THE COAL IN THE FIREPLACE FOR HOURS. I REMEMBER I ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS FATHER ONE TIME.
BUT HE DIDN'T LIKE TO SPEAK ABOUT THE PAST.
GREAT GRANDDAD WILLIAM HAD ONLY ENLISTED A SHORT TIME BEFORE HE WENT TO FIGHT AT ARRAS.
I DOUBT THAT HE KNEW WHAT AWAITED HIM IN BATTLE.
With gratitude to...
General Nicholas Fury
Who Served His Country With Honor
I CANNOT IMAGINE THAT ANYBODY EVER REALLY DOES.
PAUL JENKINS
WRITER
RAMON BACHS
PENCILER
JOHN LUCAS
INKER
STUDIO F
COLORS
VC'S GENT
LETTERS
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FLORENCE--OUR "BIG LITTLE NANNY"--PROBABLY SAW HIM OFF AT VICTORIA STATION AS HE WENT AWAY TO WAR.
STANDING IN A THRONG OF HUNDREDS OF SIMILAR YOUNG MEN FROM FAMILIES JUST LIKE OURS.
MY GREAT GRANDMOTHER MIGHT HAVE SUSPECTED--BUT NEVER ACCEPTED--THAT THIS WAS THE LAST TIME SHE WOULD EVER SEE HIM.
MONTHS LATER, I IMAGINE MY GREAT GRANDDAD WILLIAM, LYING WOUNDED IN THE UBIQUITOUS FRENCH MUD, NOT AFRAID FOR THE LOSS OF HIS LIFE, BUT AFRAID THAT HE'D NEVER SEE HIS WIFE AGAIN.
LIKE COUNTLESS MILLIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO'VE TAKEN THE FIELD BEFORE AND SINCE.
TWO OF MY FOUR GREAT GRANDFATHERS DIED IN THAT WAR.
DAILY BUGLE
ACT of WAR

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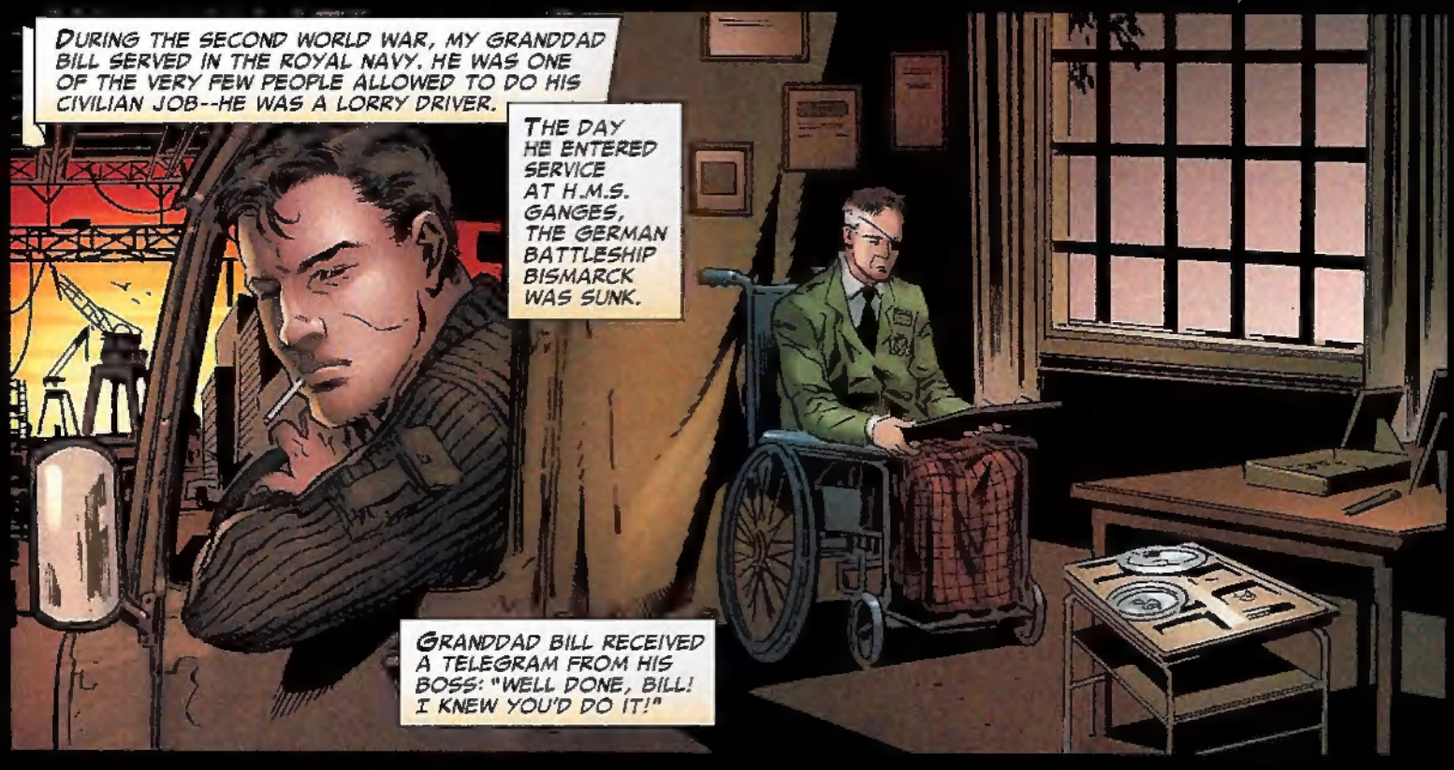
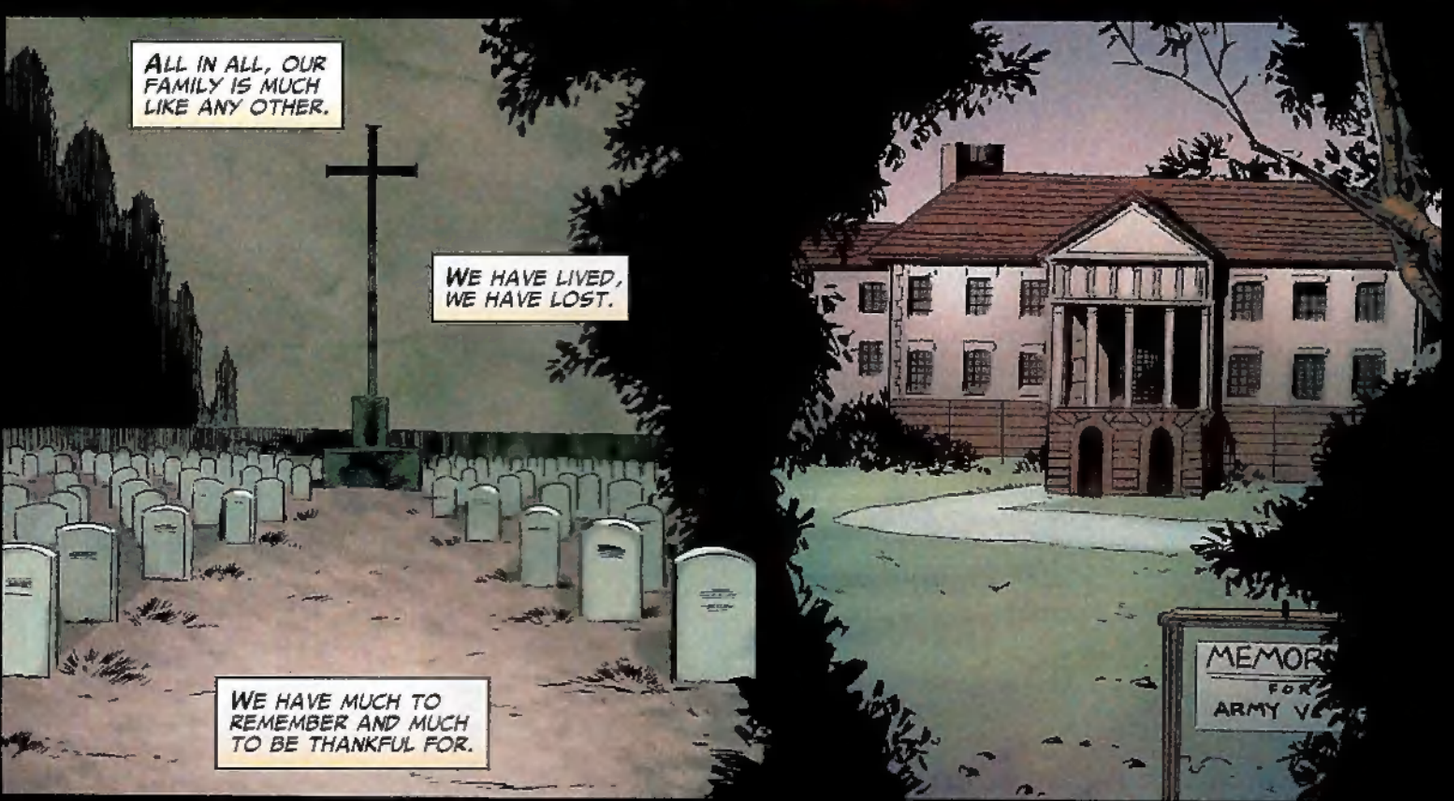
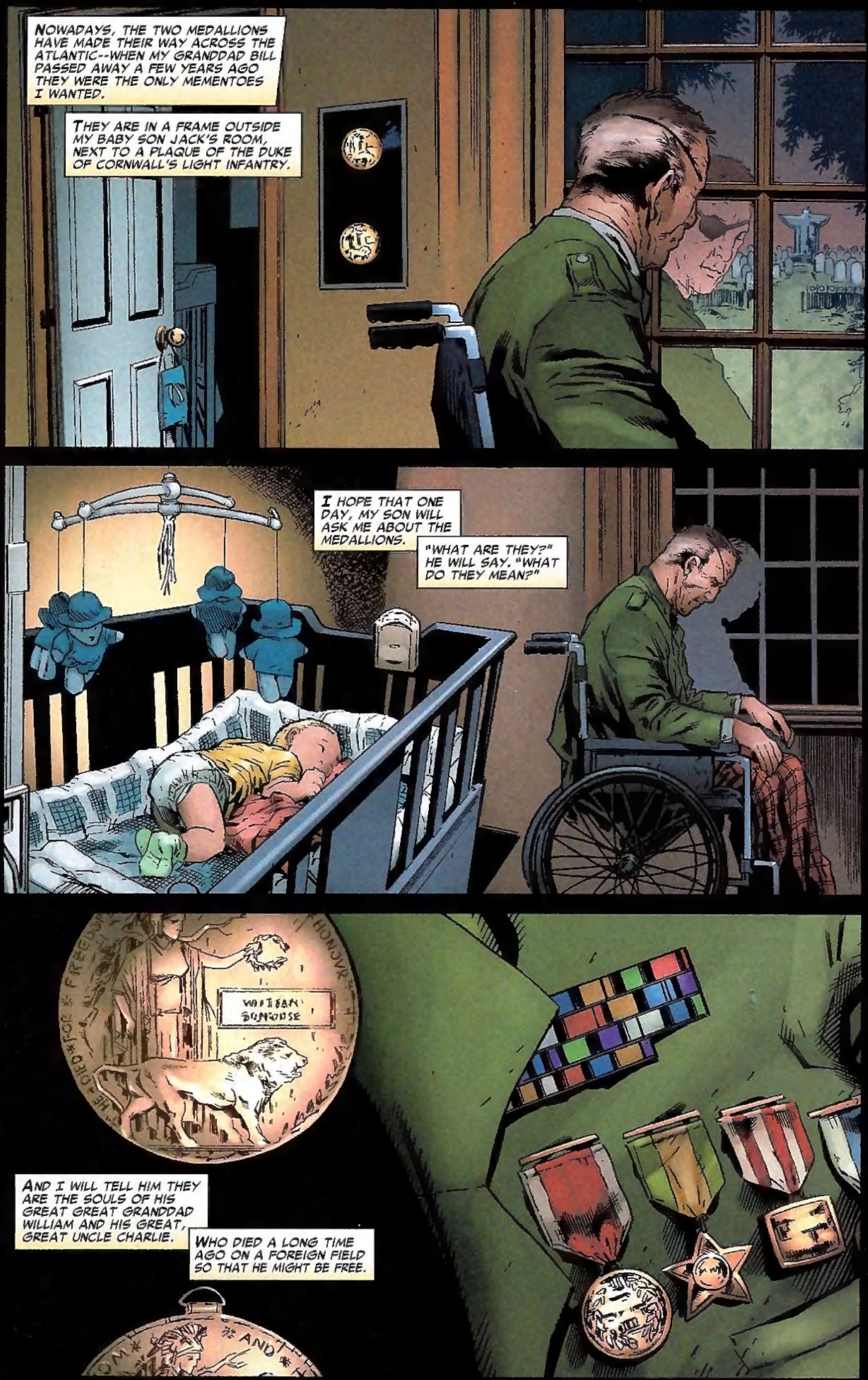

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, MY GRANDDAD BILL SERVED IN THE ROYAL NAVY. HE WAS ONE OF THE VERY FEW PEOPLE ALLOWED TO DO HIS CIVILIAN JOB--HE WAS A LORRY DRIVER.
THE DAY HE ENTERED SERVICE AT H.M.S. GANGES, THE GERMAN BATTLESHIP BISMARCK WAS SUNK.
GRANDDAD BILL RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM HIS BOSS: "WELL DONE, BILL! I KNEW YOU'D DO IT!"

MY DAD REMAINS IMMENSELY PROUD OF HIS SERVICE IN THE DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY. HE REGULARLY ATTENDS REGIMENTAL REUNIONS BUT THE RANKS ARE THINNING OUT A LITTLE AS THE D.C.L.I. HAS LONG SINCE BEEN DISBANDED.
DAILY BUGLE
ACT of WAR
DAD IS A GREAT STUDENT OF MILITARY HISTORY. HE ENSURED MY HEALTHY RESPECT FOR ANY MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES.


ALL IN ALL, OUR FAMILY IS MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER.
WE HAVE LIVED, WE HAVE LOST.
WE HAVE MUCH TO REMEMBER AND MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR.


NOWADAYS, THE TWO MEDALLIONS HAVE MADE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC--WHEN MY GRANDDAD BILL PASSED AWAY A FEW YEARS AGO THEY WERE THE ONLY MEMENTOES I WANTED.
THEY ARE IN A FRAME OUTSIDE MY BABY SON JACK'S ROOM, NEXT TO A PLAQUE OF THE DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY.
I HOPE THAT ONE DAY, MY SON WILL ASK ME ABOUT THE MEDALLIONS.
"WHAT ARE THEY?" HE WILL SAY. "WHAT DO THEY MEAN?"
AND I WILL TELL HIM THEY ARE THE SOULS OF HIS GREAT GREAT GRANDDAD WILLIAM AND HIS GREAT, GREAT UNCLE CHARLIE.
WHO DIED A LONG TIME AGO ON A FOREIGN FIELD SO THAT HE MIGHT BE FREE.